Staying safe with Twitter

Youth Activist Checklist:
Guidance on Digital Safety and
Online Protection of Young People

United Nations
Office of the Secretary-General's
Envoy on Youth

KNOW Your Rights

- Your right to freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly are very important for promoting human rights, peace, and seeking justice. In order for you to exercise these rights safely in online spaces, you have to be protected from discrimination, surveillance, violations of your privacy and other threats in online spaces.

- We know that learning definitions can sometimes be difficult, even boring. But knowing your rights can actually be empowering because it can help you understand what your rights are in a specific situation, and how you can address different situations that might be violations of your human rights in online spaces!

- Some people may think that because of the rapid rise of technology, people are not protected under international human rights law from digital surveillance, online privacy and other issues affecting young activists online. This is untrue! Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted more than 70 years ago, prescribes that everyone has the right to protection of law against attacks on their privacy.

It's important to know that this protection and right to privacy applies to online spaces as well! This human right was again included in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which only strengthened the importance of this right.

» **When we speak about privacy in online spaces, we are not speaking about private, secluded online spaces only,** but also about information that is publicly available. Even collection of data related to your identity, family or life already affects your right to privacy, because through this process you may lose some control over information that could put your privacy at risk (A/HRC/27/37 para 20).

» **Worries about violations of privacy, discrimination and other online threats can prevent some young people from voicing their concerns and voices.** But it is important to remember that you have the right to freedom of expression, under the Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which includes freedom to seek, receive and share information and ideas of all kinds, in the media of your choice.

» **You are entitled to all rights under international human rights law regardless of your age, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity and other factors.** You are protected from discrimination of any kind under the Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights! Other specific declarations - such as the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as The Convention on the Rights of the Child - all provide special protection measures to these and other groups that are often marginalized in online spaces, and attacked when raising their voices.

» **Different actors can also stand in the way of your participation in protests** (also called the freedom of peaceful assembly) online and offline, through use of various technologies. Remember that the right to freedom of peaceful assembly is also your human rights, covered under the Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights!

» **It is important to know that States have the duty to always respect all human rights.** However, in very extreme cases, there may be exceptions and States may be allowed to limit certain human rights. These limits can be put on ONLY IF they do not discriminate against anyone, and if they are absolutely necessary for maintaining public safety and public order (A/HRC/44/24, para. 6)

» That being said, **filtering of content related to peaceful protests and online peaceful youth activism; blocking of websites of certain platforms that young people use to mobilize peaceful protesters; unlawful closure of accounts belonging to young activists; shutdown of the internet by state and non-state actors are human rights violations that you can and should report!** (A/HRC/44/24, para 17).

» Important to know: **States and social media companies have duties and responsibilities to protect your right to privacy, freedom from discrimination, freedom from hate speech, freedom to expression and peaceful assembly.**

States can sometimes try and manipulate social media companies by using confusing and unclear laws to promote hate speech, to pressure social media companies to remove content, and some social media companies might feel that they do not have a choice under this pressure (A/HRC/35/22 para 49).

This is why it is important to be aware of your rights under international human rights law and laws in your country. Know your rights because knowledge is the first step to preventing violations of your human rights in online spaces.

CHECK – Your Digital Footprint

There are 5 simple steps that you can take to check your digital footprint on Twitter and to help safeguard it!

Step 1

SEARCH YOURSELF

Type your name into search engines and search your name using the Twitter search bar

What to Look For

– Review the search result listings associated with your name, username and nicknames.

– Take note if there are any "red flags" (personal information leaked such as home address, phone number, financial information)

– If you see content that you suspect may be breaking Twitter's rules, you can report it and it may be removed.

Step 2

REVIEW YOUR SETTINGS

> Go to Settings on Twitter

> See "Security and Account Access"

> See "Connected Apps" ;
See "Login and Security"

What to Look For

– You should be cautious before giving any third-party or unknown application access to your account or permission to view or use your data.

– Carefully evaluate how each app uses the data from your account (can they see your protected tweets? are they accessing personal data such as your date of birth?)

– Review the access permission an app has (can it post a Tweet on your behalf to your timeline?)

– Enable Two-Factor Authentication in your Security settings to protect your account from unauthorized access, by using your phone, a code generator or a security key as a second layer of account protection

– Enable "password reset protect" for additional password protection

Step 3

TAKE CONTROL

> *Go to Settings on Twitter*

> *See "Privacy and Safety"*

> *See "Audience and tagging"*

What to Look For

– Review who can see your Tweets. You decide who sees your Tweets. If you'd rather a more private experience, you can opt to

– Take control of who can tag you on photos, and review who can see them.

– *Check "Hide Sensitive Content" under Search Settings to filter out sensitive content*

Remember, your Tweets are your space.
Control who can reply to your Tweet by changing 'Everyone can reply' to 'People you follow' or 'Only people you mention' when composing a tweet. You can also change this after you Tweet.

Step 4

REVIEW YOUR LOCATION INFORMATION

> *Go to Settings on Twitter*

> *See "Privacy and Safety"*

> *See "Your Tweets"*

What to Look For

– Review your settings when it comes to sharing geographical locations. When you opt-in to "Add location information to your Tweets", your followers and viewers of your content will see where you're Tweeting from.

– Evaluate the pros and cons of adding location information to your Tweets. Sometimes it can be fun to share if you want followers to know you're on vacation, etc. Other times, you may prefer to withhold such information if you think it's risky to share.

– You can also remove all location information from your past Tweets.

Step 5

DECIDE WHO CAN REACH YOU

> Go to Settings on Twitter

> See "Privacy and Safety"

> See "Your Tweets"

What to Look For

– Enabling "Allow message requests from everyone" will allow anyone on Twitter to contact you by sending a Direct Message request, even if you don't follow them.

– Be mindful when accepting Direct Message requests, as you will engage with the sender's account once you click "Accept"

– If you encounter harmful messages, you have the option to block the sender's account and report the conversation.

In addition to these 5 steps, remember the golden rule:

THINK before you Tweet.

While these steps can help you safeguard your online experience, it is also important to be mindful and intentional with what you choose to share.

REPORT
Violations of the Twitter Rules

The Twitter Rules are there to ensure that everyone can participate in the public conversation freely and safely.

In this section, you'll find an overview of how to report abusive or harmful content on Twitter, as follows:

OPTION 1

REPORT a Tweet

> Go to Tweet Options (three dots at top right corner of the Tweet)
> Click on 'Report Tweet'
> Select your reason for reporting
> Specify who the Tweet is targeting

You can add multiple Tweets from the same user to the report.

OPTION 2

REPORT an Account e.g. for spam, impersonation or other violations of the Twitter Rules

> Select Account Options (three dots at top right corner of the user profile)
> Select your reason for reporting the account
> Select who the account is targeting or How the account is behaving

*Remember you can always ask for help from Twitter Support here.